

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): ~~Method for preparing a material, comprising A method to protect a base material (4) provided with a water-insoluble substance, a covering micro-organism layer (1) and optionally a growth substrate from degradation, said method comprising~~

[[-]] a) ~~_____~~ applying a water-insoluble substance to the base material,

[[-]] b) ~~_____~~ optionally applying a growth substrate for growing a micro-organism to the base material; and followed by

[[-]] c) ~~_____~~ applying a micro-organism layer to the base material ~~comprising the water-insoluble material.~~

2. (currently amended): ~~Method according to The method of claim 1, wherein the base material is subjected to a treatment step a) is conducted in the presence of a heated medium while applying the water-insoluble substance, preferably at a temperature in the range of 30 to 240°C, more preferably in the range of 60-160 °C, even more preferably in the range of 70-120°C.~~

3. (currently amended): ~~Method according to The method of claim 2 or 3 1, wherein the base material is dried at an elevated temperature, in particular which further includes the step of drying at a temperature in the range of about 100-140°C, after applying the water-insoluble substance step a).~~

4. (currently amended): ~~Method according to any of the preceding claims The method of claim 1, wherein in step a) at least part of the water-insoluble substance is applied by impregnation into the base material.~~

5. (currently amended): ~~Method according to any of the preceding claims The method of claim 1, wherein in step a) the water-insoluble substance is applied as a mixture comprising the water-insoluble substance and a solvent for the water-insoluble substance.~~

6. (currently amended): ~~Method according to~~ The method of claim 5, wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of alcohols, ethers and ketones.

7. (currently amended): ~~Method according to any one of the preceding claims~~ The method of claim 1, wherein the growth substrate is applied in a layer together with the micro-organism and/or as a separate layer ~~[[()]]~~ between the base material and the micro-organism ~~[[()]]~~ before applying the micro-organism layer step c).

8. (currently amended): ~~Material~~ A treated material obtainable by ~~[[a]]~~ the method according to any one of the preceding claims of claim 1.

9. (currently amended): ~~Material, preferably obtainable by a method according to any one of the claims 1-8, comprising~~ A composition of matter which comprises a base material ~~[[()]]~~ provided with a ~~layer comprising~~ coating of a water-insoluble substance at the surface and/or on the surface of the base material, and a covering micro-organism layer.

10. (currently amended): ~~Material according to claim 8 or~~ The composition of claim 9, which is at least partially impregnated with wherein the water-insoluble substance at least partially impregnates the base material.

11. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-10~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein at least part of the water-insoluble substance is present in a ~~coating layer~~ layer ~~[[()]]~~ on top of the surface of the base material.

12. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-11~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein the water insoluble ~~coating layer~~ layer has a thickness in the range of 1-1000 µm.

13. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-12~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein the water-insoluble substance comprises at least one component selected from mineral oils and waxes, vegetable oils and waxes and animal oils and wax, ~~preferably at least one component selected from vegetable oils and vegetable waxes.~~

14. (currently amended): ~~Material according to~~ The composition of claim 13, wherein the water-insoluble substance ~~is selected from the group~~ comprises at least one C4 to C32 saturated and or unsaturated fatty acid-esters, and preferably is a fatty acid ester of a fatty acid with glycerol or another polyol.

15. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-14~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein a growth substrate is present in the micro-organism layer ~~[[(1)]]~~, and/or in ~~an intermediate~~ a growth substrate layer ~~[[(2)]]~~ between the micro-organism layer ~~[[(1)]]~~ and the base material ~~(4)~~, adjacent to the ~~micro-organism layer~~.

16. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-15~~ The composition of claim 15, wherein ~~[[a]] the growth substrate is present selected from the group consisting of~~ comprises carbohydrates and/or proteins including derivatives and mixtures thereof.

17. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-16~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein the thickness of the micro-organism layer is less than about 1000 μm , ~~preferably from about 5-100 μm .~~

18. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-17~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein the micro-organism layer comprises at least one ~~micro-organism selected from the group consisting of bacteria~~ ~~[[and]] or fungi—in particular from the group of black yeasts and related fungi—preferably from the group of pigmented micro-organisms.~~

19. (currently amended): ~~Material according to~~ The composition of claim 18, wherein the micro-organism layer comprises *Aureobasidium spp.*

20. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-19~~ The composition of claim 9, wherein the base material is ~~selected from the group consisting of wood, concrete, ceramic~~ ~~[[and]] or stone, preferably wood.~~

21. (currently amended): ~~Material according to any one of the claims 8-20, wherein the material~~ The composition of claim 9 which is a construction or building material.

22. (canceled)

23. (currently amended): Garden furniture, fence, façade element or cladding
comprising ~~a material according to any one of the claims 8-21~~ the composition of claim 9.